



## **Tips for Communicating with Young Fathers**

### ***Your Attitudes***

- Have high expectations for young fathers
- Consciously envision a positive future for all young fathers
- Assume that fathers want, need and have the responsibility for becoming actively involved parents
- Start where the young man is, not where you think he should be or where stereotypes might lead you. Be nonjudgmental
- Be respectful. View each father as an equal human being worthy of respect and dignity. Communicate on an equal level, never from a position of superiority.
- Take stock of your own attitudes.
- Be patient—persevere.
- Demonstrate genuine and ongoing caring for the fathers. You will have to earn their trust.
- Recognize that fathers are different than mothers, and therefore, want and need specific programming that will meet their unique needs.

### ***Creating the Environment***

- Make the physical and emotional environment conducive to men.
- Build trust by creating an atmosphere of openness and honesty.
- Promote positive peer pressure among participants.

### ***Communication Techniques***

- Be real and down to earth.
- Male staff can take opportunities to talk man to man.
- Use language and messages that men will respond to.
- Be dramatic and provocative when delivering messages about manhood and the importance of fathers.
- Model the communication skills that you are attempting to foster.
- Listen and learn from the young men. Share the leadership.
- Talk to the fathers about the way that businesses and public institutions operate.
- Be warm and caring but also firm.
- Build in small successes.

**Source: Partners for Fragile Families, Washington, DC, 1997**

*“A truly rich man is one whose children run into his arms when his hands are empty.”*

*Author Unknown*

Visit the Region III Fatherhood Website at:

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/region3/program\\_info/fatherhood.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/region3/program_info/fatherhood.html)